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REVIEW

PAULINA HORBOWICZ: *How to be Norwegian in Talk? Polish-Norwegian interethnic conversation analysis*. Oslo: Novus Press, 2010. 386 pp.

The book is a revised version of a doctoral dissertation defended in 2009 at the Adam Mickiewicz University. It has recently been awarded the price of the Polish Prime Minister for the best linguistic dissertation written in Poland in the year 2009. The book is a rather extensive study (almost 400 pages) of certain conversation strategies typical for the Norwegian *ethnic communication pattern* (ECP) and of implementation of these by Polish L2-learners of Norwegian, both those who possess a native-like command of Norwegian, as well as those who are less advanced. The study consists of nine chapters, of which the first three discuss the purpose and the methodology of the study (Chapter 1), the notion of *cultural frames* (Chapter 2) and that of *communicative practices* (Chapter 3). Data collection, the participants and a description of the methodology are discussed in Chapter 4. In the chapters 5 to 8, the results of the study are presented. First, the author discusses asymmetry in interethnic conversations (Chapter 5) and then she goes on to focus on three issues of the ECP that are visible in the data material: accompanying the interlocutor (Chapter 6), projecting of the forthcoming turn (Chapter 7) and disagreement marking (Chapter 8). The last chapter, Chapter 9, is a conclusion and summary chapter. The main research question that the author tries to answer is: which features of conversation are considered as typical Norwegian by Norwegians and to what extent do Polish speakers learning Norwegian are conscious of these and implement them.

The methodological approach of the study integrates the methodology of conversation analysis (CA) and “a pragmatic and an intercultural approach.” The study is rather qualitative than quantitative, as it is based on an analysis of thirteen conversations between Norwegians and Poles. Horbowicz assumes that the Norwegian ECP will be more visible in interethnic conversations than it possibly would be in intraethnic ones. Moreover, she also aims to better understand aspects of communication in second language learning. In the introduction, Horbowicz writes (p. 25) that “the corpus is attached on a CD to this dissertation.” Unfortunately, this seems however not to be the case, although a CD with the raw data material would be very appreciated.

As already mentioned, the two first chapters are devoted to a definition of two notions: the notion of cultural frames (Chapter 2) and the notions of communicative practices (Chapter 3). In chapter 2, Horbowicz defines the term *cultural frame* as “a complex communicative pattern of elements that is grounded in values predominant in the given society and mediated through practices of everyday interaction” (p. 35). Then she makes attempts to define “the frame of being Norwegian” with a special focus on oral communication. As it is known from earlier studies that the Norwegian society is in general secular and individualistic (in contrast to the Polish, which is traditional and less individualistic), differences in oral communication in these two ethnical groups are likely to be found. Based on own results, but also on the results of Daun (2005) and Hofstede (1994), she concludes that the frame of being Norwegian in oral communication includes the following components: equality, harmony, distance, seriousness, simplicity and locality. Then, in Chapter 3, Horbowicz defines the term *communicative practice* as “interactional phenomena that serve a specific conversational function and originate from frames for interaction” (p. 74). Norwegian communicative practice is contrasted with the Swedish and the Polish one. Having discussed both cultural frames and communicative practices, the author summarizes the result of Chapter 2 and 3 in her description of the Norwegian ECP that consists of being equal, harmonious, predictable, distanced and Norwegian (p. 93). The last characteristic seem however a bit circular; the author seems to mean here that being Norwegian is taking for granted a number of cultural and social references. The foundations of the list of features that create the Norwegian ECP could also be given in a more explicit way, although the list seem very intuitive.

In Chapter 4, the process of data collection is described and the methodological issues are discussed. The base of Horbowicz’s book consists of thirteen recorded conversations between Norwegians and Poles conducted in Norwegian, of which ten were videotaped and the remaining three were audiotaped. These real-life conversations were recorded in different places without the researcher being present and the total length of the material is about 6h30m. The material was then transcribed in the Jeffersonian transcription system. The data are thus collected by semi-elicitation and Horbowicz argues convincingly that this method gives a reliable set of data. She describes then the interviews and the participants of these in a number of lucid tables included in Chapter 4.

In the first of the resultative chapters (Chapter 5), the author discusses the issue of asymmetry in interethnic talk and shows how the asymmetrical conversation between native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers

(NNS) is balanced by the speakers. Whereas the NS both compliment the language command of the NNS, explain the cultural artefacts and correct the language usage, the NNS limit themselves to comment of their deficient command of the target language, self-corrections and word-searches. Some of these strategies are exemplified in the chapter, some are not. Both the NS and the NNS are shown to try to create a role in the conversation and a participant status. Horbowicz also shows that the NS treat their NNS-interlocutors as not fully independent partners, and that this is dependent on the degree to which the NNS have mastered the target language. The data also show a strong cooperation will exhibited by the NS by a number of means.

Chapter 6 is devoted to an analysis of how the interlocutors accompany each other. Accompanying the interlocutor is one of the most relevant tasks in a conversation and Horbowicz chooses to describe three ways in which this is maintained: paraphrases, pro-repeats and echo-turns. However, she does not devote much place to pro-repeats. In all, she analyses about 100 instances of paraphrases and around 30 instances of echo-turns and concludes that the majority of the former serve to reformulate the utterances of the NNS and in this way to enable the NS to control the progress of conversation topics. This seems to be a feature that is typical for interethnic conversations in general. The author concludes that the NS-interlocutors show a supportive behaviour, as maintaining understanding is one of the central practices in the Norwegian conversation, whereas the Polish NNS, as they do not use these practices, risk the impression of being not supportive enough in the conversation with their Norwegian counterparts.

In Chapter 7, Horbowicz shows how the forthcoming turn is projected in the conversations in question. She enumerates three practices for such turn projection: *eller*-inquiry (i.e. *or*-inquiry), yes/no-answers to wh-questions and indirect questions. She notes then (section 7.1) that the *or*-inquiry is used in clarifying questions, questions concerning the interlocutor (or the interlocutor's opinion) and in suggestions. However, there is a clear difference between the use of *or*-inquiry by NS and NNS, as the latter do not use it in clarifying questions and as they use it less idiomatic in the other functions as well. The author concludes that the use of *or*-inquiry is yet another sign of the Norwegian interaction being negotiation-oriented rather than domination-oriented. In section 7.2 the use of yes/no-answers to wh-question is discussed and the obtained results confirm the results presented in Svennevig (2001), showing that *ja* 'yes' is used for interactional roles, whereas *nei* 'no' and *jo* 'in fact' are used to refer to the presupposition in the inquiry. Finally, indirect questions are highlighted and Horbowicz states here that these are used in her material instead of wh-questions. She interprets this as a way of avoiding domination in the conversation. One of the most important results of the chapter is the finding that the Norwegian conversation is highly harmony-oriented, a feature being visible both in the dispreference for directly negative answers and for wh-questions. Instead, yes/no-questions followed by an *or*-inquiry are preferred. Moreover, the answer by *ja*, *nei* or *jo* on a wh-question signals that the forthcoming response may deviate from the common expectations. It is concluded that the conversations studied are strongly oriented to maintain coherence.

In the last of the resultative chapters, Chapter 8, the realization of disagreement is discussed. Marking disagreement is often culture-dependent and this cultural dependency is also visible in the language. For example, Polish is said to make use of the so-called positive politeness, whereas Norwegian uses negative politeness instead. Horbowicz opens the chapter with stating that there are very few studies on disagreement marking in both Polish and Norwegian. She identifies then two strategies as how to disagree with the interlocutor that are present in her material: the use of *nja* 'well' and the weak agreement tokens and she concludes that both are used in a similar way by both NS- and NNS-subjects. Then, the author analyses longer fragments of the data material in three sections: 8.4, 8.5, and 8.6. Finally, Horbowicz concludes that there is a strong tendency to maintain a harmonious conversation and to signal an upcoming disagreement in a clear way in the Norwegian ECP. She also states that the Polish NNS-subjects make use of direct opposition to a substantial extent compared to their Norwegian NS-interlocutors, risking consequently to be perceived as uncooperative or impolite. The Polish consultants seem also to prefer more straight judgements in the conversation, showing thus a more confrontative style compared to Norwegians, who adopt a more negotiative and balanced style.

The idea behind the study of Horbowicz is that there exist ethnic-specific ways of expressing social relations and that these ways are also manifested at the linguistic level. Her book provides an attempt to analyse some aspects of the Norwegian ECP. By contrasting Polish and Norwegian interlocutors, she hopes to reveal the ethnic-specific patterns of the conversation. Description of the Norwegian conversation pattern is thus the main goal of the project. Another goal is a description of interethnic conversation by identification of its structural features and asymmetric practices. Among the many interesting results of the study, the description of the Norwegian ECP and the realization of this ECP by Polish L2-learners should be mentioned first. Horbowicz states that the Norwegian ECP is characterized by five features: equality, harmony, predictability, distance and by 'being Norwegian', a label that the undersigned however finds a bit diffuse. Further, the author concludes that the Norwegian communication routine is support-oriented and that the NNS-subjects in the study show some difficulties with mastering this routine. Interestingly, this is not directly connected to the fluency they have in Norwegian otherwise.

Horbowicz makes in her book an interesting contribution not only to the field of conversation analysis, but also to the didactics of Norwegian, as her result can easily be implemented in teaching of the language. She even sketches a number of future studies to be done on the subject. The present study is the first one ever done on everyday interethnic conversation between Polish and Norwegian speakers in Norwegian as lingua franca and it is a well-written piece of work, with a transparent structure and a style enjoyable to the reader.

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